



**Testimony in Support of SB 763, AN ACT  
CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION  
COVERAGE FOR POLICE OFFICERS, FIREFIGHTERS  
AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS WITH  
POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

**Submitted by Officer Matthew D'Amore, Feb. 16, 2017  
Before the Public Safety Committee**

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Good morning Chairmen Larson, Guglielmo and Verrengia, and members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Officer Matthew D'Amore. I am an 11-year member of the Town Of Plainville Police Department and a member of AFSCME Local 1706.

I am here today to speak in support of Senate Bill 763, which would re-enable post traumatic stress disorder to be covered under Workers' Compensation, as it was in Connecticut until 1993.

In 2009, I responded to an emergency call. A young woman had been violently stabbed. She died that night, a victim of murder for which her ex-boyfriend was charged and convicted. I was haunted by the graphic and gruesome images of that night for about a year. It was a tough incident to deal with.

When we signed up for the job to be a police officer, we understood the risks and the trauma that come with being a cop. However, that does not justify ignoring a significant tear in the safety net that has made our jobs harder and our lives more difficult. I could not imagine how hard it was for officers dealing with a mass shooting, especially that of young children, to deal with such trauma without support from the government they work for.

We live in a time when government budgets are tight. I am sensitive to the concern that extending workers' comp coverage to PTSD has serious cost implications. But there are ways to craft this proposed legislation in a way that limits cost and meets the needs of police officers who have encountered grave, life-changing trauma. Every cop has seen many dead bodies. That's not what we're talking about in this bill. We're talking about the rare circumstances where they've experienced significant trauma that just won't go away. I was lucky enough to be able to get past my incident with my own support system. Others are not as lucky.

Coverage in this bill could include a temporary issue that an officer just needs a little help to get past. You wouldn't dream of an officer not being covered for a physical injury sustained at work, such as being stabbed or shot. Why would a serious mental injury be any different? When treated properly, many officers should be able to get back to doing the job they love. However, if left untreated with no support from the employer or the workers' comp system, the consequences could be disastrous.

Right now, the system is telling us that we're on our own. Use our own sick time. Use our vacation time. Basically take a pay cut. Or just quit and give up. That is not the right way to go. PTSD is far too serious to ignore. It takes a mental, physical and economic toll on officers and families. We can and must do better for our men and women in blue.

I thank your committee for raising SB 763 and urge your support. I would happy to answer any questions.